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OBSERVATIONS ON
CARPATHIAN TOURS

The Ukrainian government is financially broke and cannot pay salaries or pensions on time. They are usually delayed from 3 to 6 months. When they are paid, pensions vary from $15 to $20 a month, while wages vary from $30 to $60 a month. There is no unemployment assistance or welfare programs.

Industry is in a disastrous state. Many of them have folded. Orders are received sporadically. For example, in the clothing industry, Turkey sends orders when they are needed in a hurry and their workers can't fill them. Workers are not paid on time. It is difficult for private industry to prosper as the tax on profits is very high. Paying over 70% hinders growth and hence development of jobs.

On top of this, inflation has been rampant since 1990. The International Monetary Fund does not offer Ukraine a bail-out package. It states that Ukraine needs to vigorously prune government spending and improve tax collection. Sad to say that Ukraine is a country where crime seems to pay – tax avoidance is routine and common. Criminal gangs extort money from profitable businesses. The economy is paralyzed and the sense of hopelessness leads to much mental depression and sends suicide rates very high. Interest on government debt rose to 150% to stave off a further devaluation of the currency. Gambling is on the rise. Unless IMF and foreign investors help and the government eliminates its disastrous management of the economy, the country could be thrown into civil strife or become a third world country as can be found in Africa.

To survive, many families send their young people to other countries to work much as was common 80 to 100 years ago. It is almost impossible for them to get visas for the U.S. The charge is $3000 to $4000 for one person to come for a period of 2 to 3 years.

How does this affect parish life? First, we must bear in mind that for several

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This is number 8 in the series of wrought-iron crosses removed from Eastern Christian Churches in the Lemko/Galician/Austro-Hungarian area which is now in southern Poland. Many of them have been removed since World War II. The cross pictured above is rather simple. The ends of the bars and radiants from the center are tipped with stylized lilies. Lilies symbolize life. This theme is carried out by the sun in the center of the crossbars. It symbolizes Christ, Who gives new life. "I am the light of the world..." John 8:12.

Almighty God, hold Thou the Cross of Jesus before our eyes and set it deep within our hearts so that there will be no escaping it. And as we face that Cross, take away our fears, strike out our sins, wipe away our tears, and through the suffering and death of Jesus, the Christ, give us newness of life and life everlasting. Amen.

SPECIAL DAYS

The Church New Year comes on Sept. 1/14. With this Indiction, we celebrate the beginning of Church Year 7506. The Indiction was the beginning of the civil, legal and church year in the later Roman Empire. The calendar of both the imperial government and the church began on September 1/14. For this reason the church calendar of fixed holy days starts on September 1. This book is called the **Menaian**.

The first major Holy Day in this book is the Birth or Nativity of the Mother of God. The day falls on September 8/21. The account of this day cannot be found in

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WHY ME?

Perhaps you have lost a child or other loved one to disease or death. Perhaps you have suffered a physical disability or an emotional setback. Perhaps a dear friend or family member has found it impossible to endure life, and has ended the pain of it in suicide, leaving you with a sense of anger and guilt. Perhaps you are the victim of continual emotional abuse and physical pain. The book of Job 19:13-22 has a special message for victims of senseless tragedy. Whatever you're suffering, the story of Job provides a special healing wisdom that can both comfort and show the way to recovery.

According to the Bible, Job is a blameless and upright man. He provides for his family both materially and spiritually. He worships God and teaches his children to do the same. Yet Job becomes the victim of tragedy. His property is destroyed. His children are murdered. He falls prey to painful disease. Job becomes the symbol of suffering for all mankind.

When we become the victim of tragedy, like Job we ask: "Why am I suffering? Why have I been given this burden? What wrong have I done to deserve this? How can I find the strength to endure?" These questions arise naturally as we struggle to adjust to the reality of our situation. They are part of the coping process. We should not feel guilt at our need to search for answers and understanding.

We may feel a wide range of emotions, some of which may seem irrational or irreverent. Sometimes we may feel that we have done something terribly wrong. It is difficult to accept, that in a world governed by a loving and all-powerful Creator, innocent people must suffer and die.

We need only think of the needless suffering of thousands of innocent people, victims of poverty, war and starvation throughout the world. We do not know the reason , but we do live in a world in which innocent people do suffer. It is a difficult but unavoidable fact of life.

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CHRONOLOGY

SEPTEMBER 1998

TWO AUTOCEPHALOUS CHURCHES have new leaders. Archbishop Seraphim of Athens and All Greece has been replaced by Archbishop Christodoulos, who is 59. Metropolitan Bazyl of the Polish Orthodox Church has been succeeded by Metropolitan Sawa, who is 60. Archbishop Christodoulos has a doctorate in religious studies and is fluent in several languages. Metropolitan Sawa has a doctorate in theology from Belgrade University.

ON ORTHODOX SUNDAY Holy Trinity Cathedral in San Francisco celebrated its 130th anniversary. A fire struck the St. Innocent chapel, which is located on the lower level of the church and went upward to inflict damage to the main church. The fire struck on Holy Pascha/April 9. Efforts were made to clean up and services were held as scheduled during Pascha and Bright week.

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH in Ninilchik, Alaska is 150 years old. It is in need of extensive repairs. It is the most photographed church on the Kenai Peninsula. Help is needed. Send to National Bank of Alaska, PO Box 1969, Kenai, AK 99611. Make checks out to Transfiguration Church, Account 21000.

MANY CHURCHES IN BULGARIA are below street level. They are entered by walking down a flight of stairs. The Turks would not allow churches to be built higher than a man – so the problem was solved by excavating into the ground.

OVER 3,000 PHOTOS depicting Romania has been donated to the Romanian Ethnic Art Museum, 3256 Warren Rd., Cleveland, OH 44111 by the Martin family. Louis Martin, the photographer, is a member of St. Mary's Parish. Copies from the collection are available.

TWO AUXILIARY BISHOPS have been consecrated for the Greek Archdiocese. They are Fr. George Papaioannou (65), a widower who is pastor of the church in Bethesda, MD, and Fr. Dimitrios Couchell (65), who is director of the St. Photius Foundation in St. Augustine, FL.

JOURNEY A SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY was written by Peter France. The book is about the path he took until accepting the Orthodox faith. He was a BBC presenter and was instrumental in developing the "Everyman" Series. He wrote in the last chapter, "Orthodox is neither Russian nor Greek. It is the inner essence of the original revelation of Christ, preserved in Russia and Greece against the rationalizing legalism of Western culture in general and the seemingly reticence and moralizing of English culture in particular."

ONLY WARSAW, POLAND HAS A LARGER Polish population than Chicago, IL. When Archbishop of the Polish Orthodox Church visited Chicago, he served in St. Joseph's Church in Wheaton, IL at which time he suggested to the many who attended the liturgy that they start a mission parish.

BOTTLED SPRING WATER is being distributed throughout Russia from a spring in Kostroma. The distribution was coordinated by Bishop Alexander, who is using the profits to rebuild churches and monasteries in his diocese of Kostroma and Galich.

THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY ON THE ISLAND OF HALKI, near Constantinople, has been closed since 1971. Great efforts are being made for its reopening, as Turkish law requires that both the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Synod be drawn from Turkish citizens. There are now less than 5000 Orthodox here. Turkish seminarians now go to Greece for their education and few of them return.

THE INDONESIAN government has officially recognized the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox are now served by five priests and one deacon. Four of them graduated from Holy Cross Seminary in Boston. They are of Indonesian birth.

PLAN FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL NOW by sending for a catalog to OCEC, PO Box 174, Centuck Sta., Yonkers, NY 10710 or call 201/768-7966. Books, audio-visual aids, a curriculum, etc. are available.

INTERNSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE IN POLAND for 6 months (housing and $150 a month). Work for Syndesmos, the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth headquartered in Bialystok. Contact: Joe Matusiak, PO Box 22, 15-950 Bialystok, Poland or Fax 48-85 543-747. E-mail syndesmos @ bianet. computerplus.com.pl.

THE MEANING AND ORIGIN OF NAMES of those from the Lemkoi, Boyka, and Hutsul areas of the Carpathians are now available from Stan Homa, 1623 S. 10th St., Arlington, VA 22204. Send $9.50. Among other things, names are derived from the occupation, ethnic origin, animals, foods, tools, etc.

ST. INNOCENT is closely connected with Yakutia, which is in the newly independent nation of Sakha Republic. This is located in north Siberia, about two-thirds of the way between Moscow and Alaska. Over 300 churches were destroyed by the communists in the nation; in Yakutia all were destroyed except the St. Nicholas Church, which had been built by St. Innocent himself. Last September at the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, a procession through the streets was made – the first since 1914 – to the new chapel erected by donations by the people which was consecrated in honor of St. Innocent on the Bicentennial Commemoration of his birth.

THROUGHOUT THE YEARS many groups have claimed to be under the omophor of the Patriarchate of Alexandria. His Beatitude Petros VII, Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa and the Holy Synod have stated that the Patriarchate does not have an Exarch in the U.S. or Canada and does not recognize any bishops who claim to be under their jurisdiction. St. Michael Bible College in Florida is not affiliated with the Patriarchate.

•Observations on Carpathian Tours

generations religion was debunked. Churches and monasteries were destroyed and clergy killed or resettled. At the present time, there is a new generation of energetic priests, many of whom studied in seminaries and academies in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Many of them have served in the Soviet army where they received only a few personal items such as towels, toothbrush, soap and a uniform. No pay, no benefits, no education credits are offered in the enlistment. For this they repaired roads, helped with harvests and did other manual work.

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The writer reads publications from and about Ukraine, visits frequently and calls regularly. He is deeply saddened because things seem to be getting worse as the years go by. He sends packages and food to relatives regularly using the services of Krayan Horwath. Call 973/831-1499. There may be shipping agents having a business near you.

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In like manner, a vivid image of the Cross is before us. Christ was lifted high that all of us might behold the effects of human sin and rebellion. All the judgments of God were laid on Him. In sorrow we are led to bow low before God and confess that the fault was ours and not Christ's. The way to Christ lies through judgment. Then the mercy of God is seen, and we are lifted up to stand before God to receive all the blessings bestowed through the Cross of Christ. The way to Christ also includes passing through the mercy of God to eternal joy.

"...today, as the Cross is lifted up, evil spirits are cast away; today the whole of creation is delivered from corruption, for all blessings have been bestowed upon us by the Cross. Wherefore we joyfully kneel before You and say; 'How great are Your works, O Lord: Glory to Thee'."

•Why Me?

The agony we feel may be a necessary part of some grand plan. But for us, we feel rage and resentment. It is only natural to be angry in the face of what seems to be meaningless suffering.

One comfort of Job's story is in knowing that at least someone else has asked the same questions and experienced the same frustrations we feel. But more importantly is that Job finds meaning to his suffering. The Bible tells us Job spoke with God and through this encounter discovered "things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."

Suffering can be tolerated only when we are able to find meaning in that suffering. This meaning comes through our decision to accept our role in life, whatever that may be. As our Orthodox forefathers say: "Bozha volya" "It's God's will" and they didn't fight it. Suffering presents us with a challenge to find goals and purpose in our lives that make even the situation which is troubling us worth living through. Once we find that life task, we can face our suffering with peace of mind.

The story of Job teaches us that we can all discover our challenge in life. Our choice to answer that challenge can give meaning to the pain and agony we feel.

ETHNIC CHUCKLE

Dorohaya Tyotya Maria,

Me husband ee yah peshlee na vacation Me doshlee dho Agra Falls shest hodene in evening. Bulee takee tired e malee pyat suitcasee. Treba nayte place spatee. Me bralee bus boh yak yah pesala vam in the other letter, me husband neh lubee drive long distance ee yeh too chicken to fly. Me husband me poveel zhe in tot situation zhe me in best to be me rentovalee caru e tak budey better hladatee place deh mozhem spatee.

Me za rentovalee caru e peshlee hladatee hotel room. Eshlee ot hotela doh hotela. Shitke all full up boh yeh convencia in town. Lem me eshle dalshe ee dalshye on highway out of town. Ee tam driving ot motela doh motela. Uzhee bullo temno ee pezno. Me takee hungry ee barz tired. Mee malee takee velekee argument. Me husband ohn takee stubborn. Ohn still want to look for room a yah yemyu kazhu zhe yah taka hungry better iste then mozhem hladatee room. Ohn neh hotche doing that. Yah got taka mad nah yeho, yah kretchyem, "Stop!" Ohn kazhe, "O.K. then budem spatee yu caree." Yah kashyem, No! Yah peshla na vacation to be comfortable. Me budem eat e then budem looking docklya me find a room to sleep."

Nashlee place. Mau vacancy sign: Rustic Cabins. Nam pokazal room. Thoe yak bilo v (in) starom krayu. Pot belly petz, bed ma open springee, window neh ma ferangee, neh mah bed lamps only light bulb u ceiling, mah takee malee rag carpet kolo postel. Me takee desperate shto uzhe nhe malee choice. Treba bratee.

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Me husband yemyu answer, "You misunderstand me mister. I don't want to buy this cabin, we just want to spend the night here."

Chelovek povel, "Take it or leave it. Someone else will come along with the conventions in town."

Me take it.

No yak yah mozhu povestee my next door neighbor zhe me nhe malee room yu Hilton ili in Holiday Inn? Mozhe yah yeh povem zhe going back to nature is the in thing. Yah dumam zhe tak to ye yu Americee. Ludee mayut velekee house ee mauut shitkee convenience ee idut doh cabin na vacation.

Budte zdrove,
New fashion not of choice,
Hanya

TEN COMMANDMENT SERIES

September 6 - You shall not kill.

O Lord, Creator of the human race, You have molded us from the dust of the earth and granted life to us by breathing into our nostrils, making us a living soul. You have commanded us to love one another and to respect each other with the full knowledge, that Your image and likeness dwells in all Your people. Strengthen us in love for all our brothers and sisters. Teach us to be gentle and kind. Bless those children in their mother's womb with Your embrace and let no harm come upon them. Remember the young and the old, the sick and the infirm. All life is precious to You, O Lord, regardless of their age or social status. Help us to care for them in thought, word and deed. We also pray for those who have been killed because of intolerance, hatred, jealousy, rage, revenge, or civil war. May those who have caused others to lose their life, come to sorrow for sin and repentance. Move us to forgive our enemies and all who wish us harm. We pray to you, O Lord, to hear our prayer offered to You from the depths of our being, and have mercy on us.

September 13 - You shall not commit adultery.

O Christ our God, the Author of mystical and holy marriage, in the beginning You created us male and female to complement each another. You have commanded us to be fruitful and multiply for the procreation of our race. For this cause a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, so that, the two may become one flesh. Though the world may teach us to distort this great gift of love and life within us, keep our eyes focused on You and the inner beauty of the soul. Subdue the passions of the flesh within us. Bless those united in holy matrimony. Keep them pure and chaste. Increase their love for one another. Help those struggling with temptation. Fortify us with Your divine Sacraments, that we may receive the grace to withstand the darts of the evil one. If we should backslide, be with us in our time of need. May we never fall into despair because of our sinfulness. Let the fire of Your love, fill the very core of our being, so that, our desire may be only to fulfill Your will. O Lord, our Hope and Desire, hear the petitions of Your servants praying to You this day, and have mercy on us.

September 20 - You shall not steal.

O God, Maker of all things visible and invisible, Who created the world and all that is within it: You commanded us to work for our possessions and daily sustenance. You said through Your Holy Apostle Paul, *"Those who do not work shall not eat," and again, "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need."* If we have stolen anything that belongs to another, help us find a way to make restitution for our act. Forgive us if we have stolen anything that belongs to our fellowman, whether they are material or even a good reputation. If we see a brother or sister in need, let us give of ourselves and never take from others' gifts and talents without their approval. Help all businessmen to be honest in their work, by never defrauding or misleading their customers. May we always give proper glory and praise to You, O Lord of all creation, and ask You to hear the prayers of Your humble servants, and have mercy on us.

September 27 - You shall not bear false witness.

O God of immeasurable love and patience, You have not destroyed us in our sins, but have given us another day to become closer to You and tell others of Your Good News. Help us to use that great gift of speech, which You have bestowed on us for Your glory and honor. Keep us from slandering our neighbors. Let truth and righteousness be our shield, honesty be a godly policy, and love be our highest virtue. May we never be careless about speaking about others, whether they are in public life, the clergy or any of our acquaintances. We pray as did the Prophet David, *"Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds. Deliver me from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue."* From the day forward, from this hour, from this minute; let the words of our mouths serve as a healing unction for Your church, our society, families and homes. Illumine our senses, that we may sing of Your glory all the day long and meditate on Your righteousness. Hear our prayer, O God of peace and Father of kindness, and quickly have mercy on us.

Raymond Mastroberte

Light Moment

You know you are overeating when you're living beyond your seams.

Dabs of Thoughts

The problem of preaching is to speak **non nova sed nove**, not fresh things but in a fresh way. There is something to be said for the conviction, that it is important to make the old truths live with a new life, to compel people to see the true meaning of that which was always known, to stab them awake to the wonder of the great things which they have duly accepted. Discovery is important – but so is rediscovery.

Many parishes could not continue to exist without perohi, holupki, and other food sales.

We do not pray alone during the Divine Liturgy. We pray together with all the saints. This is expressed when the priest chants: "Remembering our most blessed and glorious Lady, the Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, together with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and one another and the whole of our lives to Christ our God." More than once during the Divine Liturgy we are called to pray with a similar exhortation: "Having remembered all the saints, again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord."

Every deanery should have a choir or at least a quartet of singers who could be called upon to sing for weddings, molebens of thanksgiving, parastases, etc.

Witnessing to our Orthodox faith is more than explaining about icons and the intricacies of our worship services. It also means we must not be afraid to make our spiritual values known to the secular world, including the importance of prayer in our lives, and to take a stand in defending them. This is a true public service announcement.

I Now Resolve

I call to God in my trouble, out of my strain and stress, yet I often forget to thank Him out of my happiness. His love has never failed me. He helps me with every task and grants me bounteous blessings even before I ask. An ever present Guardian Who always knows my need – He comforts me and guides me in thought and word and deed. I now resolve to remember to enter into His courts with praise, with gratitude, and gladness however busy my days.

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TEN COMMANDMENT SERIES

September 6 - You shall not kill.

O Lord, Creator of the human race, You have molded us from the dust of the earth and granted life to us by breathing into our nostrils, making us a living soul. You have commanded us to love one another and to respect each other with the full knowledge, that Your image and likeness dwells in all Your people. Strengthen us in love for all our brothers and sisters. Teach us to be gentle and kind. Bless those children in their mother's womb with Your embrace and let no harm come upon them. Remember the young and the old, the sick and the infirm. All life is precious to You, O Lord, regardless of their age or social status. Help us to care for them in thought, word and deed. We also pray for those who have been killed because of intolerance, hatred, jealousy, rage, revenge, or civil war. May those who have caused others to lose their life, come to sorrow for sin and repentance. Move us to forgive our enemies and all who wish us harm. We pray to you, O Lord, to hear our prayer offered to You from the depths of our being, and have mercy on us.

September 13 - You shall not commit adultery.

O Christ our God, the Author of mystical and holy marriage, in the beginning You created us male and female to complement each another. You have commanded us to be fruitful and multiply for the procreation of our race. For this cause a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, so that, the two may become one flesh. Though the world may teach us to distort this great gift of love and life within us, keep our eyes focused on You and the inner beauty of the soul. Subdue the passions of the flesh within us. Bless those united in holy matrimony. Keep them pure and chaste. Increase their love for one another. Help those struggling with temptation. Fortify us with Your divine Sacraments, that we may receive the grace to withstand the darts of the evil one. If we should backslide, be with us in our time of need. May we never fall into despair because of our sinfulness. Let the fire of Your love, fill the very core of our being, so that, our desire may be only to fulfill Your will. O Lord, our Hope and Desire, hear the petitions of Your servants praying to You this day, and have mercy on us.

September 20 - You shall not steal.

O God, Maker of all things visible and invisible, Who created the world and all that is within it: You commanded us to work for our possessions and daily sustenance. You said through Your Holy Apostle Paul, *"Those who do not work shall not eat," and again, "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need."* If we have stolen anything that belongs to another, help us find a way to make restitution for our act. Forgive us if we have stolen anything that belongs to our fellowman, whether they are material or even a good reputation. If we see a brother or sister in need, let us give of ourselves and never take from others' gifts and talents without their approval. Help all businessmen to be honest in their work, by never defrauding or misleading their customers. May we always give proper glory and praise to You, O Lord of all creation, and ask You to hear the prayers of Your humble servants, and have mercy on us.

September 27 - You shall not bear false witness.

O God of immeasurable love and patience, You have not destroyed us in our sins, but have given us another day to become closer to You and tell others of Your Good News. Help us to use that great gift of speech, which You have bestowed on us for Your glory and honor. Keep us from slandering our neighbors. Let truth and righteousness be our shield, honesty be a godly policy, and love be our highest virtue. May we never be careless about speaking about others, whether they are in public life, the clergy or any of our acquaintances. We pray as did the Prophet David, *"Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds. Deliver me from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue."* From the day forward, from this hour, from this minute; let the words of our mouths serve as a healing unction for Your church, our society, families and homes. Illumine our senses, that we may sing of Your glory all the day long and meditate on Your righteousness. Hear our prayer, O God of peace and Father of kindness, and quickly have mercy on us.

Raymond Mastroberte

Light Moment

You know you are overeating when you're living beyond your seams.

Dabs of Thoughts

The problem of preaching is to speak **non nova sed nove**, not fresh things but in a fresh way. There is something to be said for the conviction, that it is important to make the old truths live with a new life, to compel people to see the true meaning of that which was always known, to stab them awake to the wonder of the great things which they have duly accepted. Discovery is important – but so is rediscovery.

Many parishes could not continue to exist without perohi, holupki, and other food sales.

We do not pray alone during the Divine Liturgy. We pray together with all the saints. This is expressed when the priest chants: "Remembering our most blessed and glorious Lady, the Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, together with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and one another and the whole of our lives to Christ our God." More than once during the Divine Liturgy we are called to pray with a similar exhortation: "Having remembered all the saints, again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord."

Every deanery should have a choir or at least a quartet of singers who could be called upon to sing for weddings, molebens of thanksgiving, parastases, etc.

Witnessing to our Orthodox faith is more than explaining about icons and the intricacies of our worship services. It also means we must not be afraid to make our spiritual values known to the secular world, including the importance of prayer in our lives, and to take a stand in defending them. This is a true public service announcement.

I Now Resolve

I call to God in my trouble, out of my strain and stress, yet I often forget to thank Him out of my happiness. His love has never failed me. He helps me with every task and grants me bounteous blessings even before I ask. An ever present Guardian Who always knows my need – He comforts me and guides me in thought and word and deed. I now resolve to remember to enter into His courts with praise, with gratitude, and gladness however busy my days.



EDITORS' NOTES

The summer has gone so fast. We were blessed by visits of many friends. Since they came from all parts of the United States, we got a perspective of church activities in areas other than our own. The same concerns seem to be widespread. These will be discussed in "The Herald" as months go by.

The request for the Easter Basket Covers has been overwhelming. We have back orders and are sending them out as soon as we get covers from Europe. By this project we are helping a cottage industry in the villages around Uzhorod. The covers are handmade in counted embroidery. The women spend several days on each one. As fast as they are made and we can find someone to bring them to the U.S. (the mail cannot be trusted), we send them to those who have ordered. People write that they are ordering covers for their children, grandchildren, godchildren and themselves. This is an opportunity to obtain an heirloom.

We commend the individuals who have ordered a packet of "Heralds" to use in their Religious Education classes. The articles are planned to be relevant in the month. The copies are received in time for the first class of the month.

One of the problems in many Sunday schools is attendance. Children come late or very rarely. Perhaps the seriousness of attending regularly and on time is not stressed for fear of offending the children or parents and they will not attend at all. It is helpful to have a service (See Hapgood p.519) and commission the teachers and bless the children on the first Sunday of classes. At one time, it was traditional to have the children receive confession on Friday, communion and attendance at special prayers on Saturday.

The Stroyens

A TEEN

I am a teen. The blessings of my youth still fresh in my memory, I continue my journey through the fields of growth. Growing up is never easy. I'm not exactly a child anymore, but I'm not an adult either. I'm somewhere in between. Being "in between" is a difficult place to be. I'm at that age when so often I feel misunderstood. I feel confused about life. I want answers that adults seem unable to give me.

I struggle with relationships in my family. I feel rivalry. Sometimes I feel jealous. What is the "Joseph's coat" of my childhood – the gift never received but longed for? Or, perhaps the gift was received, and it brought the envy and jealousy of others. (Genesis 37:3-4)

Today, I will spend some time with family scars – quarrels, misunderstandings, grudges, jealousies that have never been dealt with. Someone seemed more loved, more talented, more popular. There were parents, brothers and sisters who didn't understand me. I never felt discovered. There was a part of me that didn't seem to fit. I kept going more and more into a shell to hide my fear. I became fearful of expressing myself. I feared rejection. Or, perhaps I hid my fear by becoming loud and jovial. I put on the mask of a clown. It was easier that way, but I was hiding all the same. Something was crying out from behind the mask wanting to be known and loved, but I just didn't know how to take off the mask. Whether I donned the mask of seeming indifference or that of a clown, am I still wearing it today?

O God, You see me as I am. With firm and gentle hands help me to take off the protective masks that I wear. Mend the scared and scarred places in my life that I may put on the new self created in Your image.

WINTER'S GRACE

As we get older it becomes more difficult for us to travel. Yet St. Helena was almost 80 years old when she took the long, difficult trip from Constantinople to Jerusalem to find the Cross on which Jesus was crucified. It must have been difficult for her.

Then, why did she go to such trouble to find the True Cross? Because she had experienced the power of the Cross in her own life and she could not rest until she found the True Cross.

This month, at the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross (Sept. 14/27), we recognize by faith the great power present in the Holy Cross – a power which puts Satan to flight. It is by the Cross that the Son of God showed His mercy to us. He accepted the Cross freely for OUR salvation. St. Paul wrote to the Galatians: "God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Gal 6:14)

Have you felt the power of the Cross in your life? Do you often think of the Cross? Do you make the sign of the Cross your constant companion and expression of faith? Do you make the sign of the Cross when you go to sleep, awake, begin a task, ward off temptation, think of Christ, send a prayer for someone, read the Scriptures or pray?

You are never too old.

THE FIRST

Most of us know that St. Stephen was the first Christian martyr; but do we know who was the first woman Christian martyr? St. Thekla, who is remembered on Sept. 24/Oct. 7, has this distinction. She is identified as the first Christian woman to suffer for her Christian faith and she is also given the title Equal to the Apostles. She received the later title because she taught about Christ influencing many pagans to turn to Christ.

She was born into an influential family, and when she was eighteen she was accepted into Christianity by St. Paul in Iconium. She decided to stay in a single state so that she could have more time to teach about Christ. Her mother was upset because she had found a fiancee for her.

Her life changed suddenly and she was free to go with Apostle Paul to Antioch. Here a young man wished to marry her. She refused his offer and he reported to the authorities that she was a follower of Christ. She was brought to trial and sentenced to be thrown into an arena with wild animals. They refused to come near her.

She was finally freed and headed for Selefki, where she continued teaching about Christ. She performed many miracles. She died here in her 90th year.

Many Theklas in the U.S. are called Tillie.

MISSION AND ALASKA FUNDS

Alaska and Mission Funds: John Russian, Mary Ann Perry, Nora Harris Siciliano, Michael Ressetar, MD, Vera Hatcher, Andrew Dacko, Mary Pysarchyk in memory of her parents John and Kathryn Pysarchyk, Mary Rentel, Nicholas Komernicky, Ethel Watlock, James Rhenish, Carolyn Herman, In memory of Michael and Mary Dranichak.

Alaska Fund: Elizabeth Casper, Margaret Dolchok, Mary Saxe

Mission Fund: George McDonald. The Stroyens to honor John Kidda on his 80th birthday.



My sister Elizabeth was planning a family get-together and couldn't decide on a dessert. She wanted something that would serve a crowd, would taste good, and was easy to prepare.

She took down her favorite cookbook and a card fell out, which she recognized as our mother's handwriting. It solved the problem! Here was a recipe she remembered from her childhood. She made the recipe and her guests ate every last bite!

MOM BOHUSH'S CHERRY CAKE

Beat together

3 eggs	1 tsp. vanilla
1 cup sugar	2/3 cup fresh orange juice
3/4 cup oil	

Add

3 cups flour	3 tsp. baking soda

Mix thoroughly and pour half into an ungreased 9x13 pan.

Cover with

1 can cherry filling and 1 can cherries (drained)

Spread remaining batter over and

Sprinkle with topping made of

1 tsp. cinnamon	1/2 cup chopped nuts
1/3 cup sugar	

Bake for 40 minutes at 350°.

Suggestions – Other fruits could be used. Try peaches, blueberries, plums or apples.

CHUCKLE

A young child asked his grandfather: "Gedo, why do you keep going to church when you can't hear a word that is said?" He replied: "What would the neighbors think if they saw me sitting on the front porch rocking on a Sunday morning? I keep going, even if I don't hear, because I want people to know whose side I'm on."

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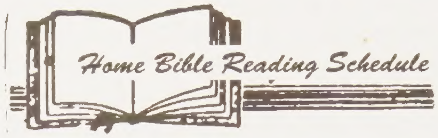
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2 Mark 3:20-27	18 Mark 6:45-53
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4 Mark 4:1-9	20 **Matt 22:35-46**
5 Mark 22:15-22	21 Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28
6 **Matt 21:32-44**	22 Mark 7:5-16
7 Mark 4:10-23	23 Mark 7:14-24
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13 **Matt 22:1-14**	29 Mark 11:11-23
14 Mark 5:24-34	30 Mark 11:23-26
15 Mark 6:1-7	
16 Mark 6:7-13	

CONVERT TO LOVE

"What is the greatest commandment in the law?" Such was the question Jesus was asked in Sept. 20 gospel reading (Matthew 22:35-46). Jesus answered immediately that it was to love – to love God and to love one's neighbour. This included loving one's most immediate or closest neighbour. Who would that be? Of course! It is YOURSELF! For if one cannot love oneself then one cannot love ANYONE ELSE.

But what does it mean to love? It is an easy thing to say that we love. People do it all the time. They say they love God. They say they love their wives or husbands, their children or their parents or their friends. But what do their **actions** say? It is true that all good actions start in the thoughts which are then usually expressed in words. But actions speak much **louder** than words.

What **do** our actions say? Do they show caring – or do they more often show **indifference**? The opposite of love is not really hate. When we are so angry at someone that we feel we hate them we are at least showing that they matter in our lives. They mean something. They make us angry. Anger is a useful emotion – although it can be very destructive if we act it out. But when we are angry at someone or something this gives us a message that something is wrong between us. We can then try to correct it. We can pray, we can try to change our attitude, we can try to communicate better – we can try to be more sensitive to our needs and the needs of others. Thus, we can improve our relationships. Anger can lead to hate or it can lead to a better, stronger love. Even hate can bring us back to love if we examine it and work on it.

But when we have decided that someone does not matter to us at all – when we have decided to be different, then we have decided on **death**. Oh, we don't literally kill the person – we just kill him or her in our lives. We say that they don't matter anymore. What can you do with that!? Imagine saying that about someone you were supposed to care about? Imagine saying that about God. Imagine saying that about yourself. Actually people **do** say these things – not always in so many words but by the way they think and act. Without love working in our hearts and in our minds we become dead, just as God told Adam and Eve. He said that when they sinned it would bring them death. That is what happens when people stop loving. They become the walking dead.

Jesus came to earth to show us that God has never stopped loving us. He came here to show by His words and His actions that human beings are infinitely precious to God. He did not hurt anyone – except with the healing pain of making them aware of how lost they were without love in their hearts. He let people hurt Him so that they could see what the lack of love could make them do. And He rose from the dead to show that love is always victorious.

Brothers and sisters, it is not too late to begin again to learn how to love. Let us start by opening our hearts to God. Let us tell Him that we have not been loving Him and that we have not been letting Him love us. Let us tell ourselves that we have not been loving to ourselves or to others. Let us tell others that they matter. Let us do it not only by words. Let us **do** things for each other. Let us from this day forward make love our aim and love our guide. God will help us.

Fr. Ihor Kutash, Ph.D.

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